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Cook County Circuit Judge Martin Agran recently upheld the decision by the Illinois General Assembly Retirement System Board to strip former Gov. George Ryan of the \$60,000 state pension he earned before the corruption that occurred in his political career. Under Illinois law, state officials convicted of a felony "arising" out of their government service lose their right to a taxpayer-funded retirement. Ryan, sentenced to 6 1/2 years in prison for mail fraud, money laundering, extortion, obstruction of justice and bribery, is appealing the conviction.

Unfortunately, there is no such law aimed at congressional felons.

At least a dozen former members of Congress who were convicted of felonies collect taxpayer-funded retirement checks, according to the National Taxpayers Union. Some of the felons and their estimated pensions include Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.), \$125,000; Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-Calif.), \$64,000; James Traficant (D-Ohio), \$40,000; and Bob Ney (R-Ohio), \$29,000.

Canceling pensions for federal lawmakers convicted of a felony makes good common sense and is good policy. Officials convicted of violating the public's trust should have no right to a retirement plan paid for by the public they betrayed. I have introduced legislation that would retract the pensions of federal politicians convicted of any of 21 public-integrity felonies.

Ten years ago, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly supported a bill to annul congressional pensions for federal lawmakers convicted of any one of 21 felonies. Though the pension-reform measure received bipartisan support, it conveniently died in the U.S. Senate. This year, the House has addressed many ethics reforms, including restrictions on lobbying and fundraising and new financial reporting requirements. However, no action has been taken on pensions for congressional felons.

In December, the new congressional leadership dropped proposed reforms to cancel pensions for congressional felons.

A month into the 110th Congress, the House passed a limited bill that would void pensions for members convicted of at least four felonies. This stripped-down bill still would permit pensions for members convicted of felonies such as making fraudulent claims, promising appointments, wire fraud, suborning perjury and income tax evasion.

The U.S. Senate has done even less. Three months ago, senators approved a measure that would nullify the pensions of those convicted of bribery, perjury or conspiracy to defraud. House and Senate leaders held many news conferences about the passage of this bill.

Yet since January, the House and Senate congressional pension bills have seen no action, had no debate and received no other consideration. In light of their splendid inactivity, you have got to wonder if the new senior leadership in Congress will fail to enact this reform -- just as their predecessors did.

Illinois is not the cleanest state in the union, but even here we seem to be able to cancel taxpayer-funded retirement checks for public officials who betrayed the public. With reports of yet more FBI investigations of Democrats and Republicans in Congress, and the federal corruption charges announced Monday against U.S. Rep. William Jefferson (D-La.), it is high time that we complete our work and kill pensions for congressional felons.